

PLEASE KEEP



ALLOTMENT & *Garden Guide*

VOL. 1 No. 6

JUNE - 1945



"It is the month of June,
The month of leaves and roses,
When pleasant sights salute the eyes,
And pleasant scents the noses."

world food shortage which has now become a reality. The Minister of Food has told us that this will be the tightest of the war years so far as food supplies are concerned, so readers of this Guide, who are undoubtedly the "wise virgins" of the parable, will

TO the poet "June rose by May dew impearled" may have been among the possible best things in the world; but in these strictly utilitarian times we gardeners and allotment holders may feel that the sight of our vegetable plot coming along nicely with a variety of crops is not only a distinctly pleasant sight but a solid insurance premium against that threatened



be patting themselves on the back that they did not rest on their spades, but continued to "Dig for Victory"—not only victory in the fighting war, but victory in the economic struggle for existence that will be the aftermath of war.

Taking stock

June is the gardener's sort of halfway house—a time for taking stock and finding out where we stand. So after patting ourselves on the back, let's survey our plots, and assess our progress to date and the extent to which we may be a bit backward and consider what needs to be done if we are not to be caught napping this coming winter. In the first five issues of this Guide we emphasised the need for planning ahead, getting our needs in good time, getting things done in good time. But gardening on paper is too easy—and it's not so easy to put paper advice into practice when the weather or lack of spare time just puts paid to the best laid plans issued by a government department or the gardening papers.

What we gardeners have to bear in mind always is that lean period from about February until the end of May. Anyone can grow vegetables in summer—and get gluts of them; but it is those winter vegetables that need more

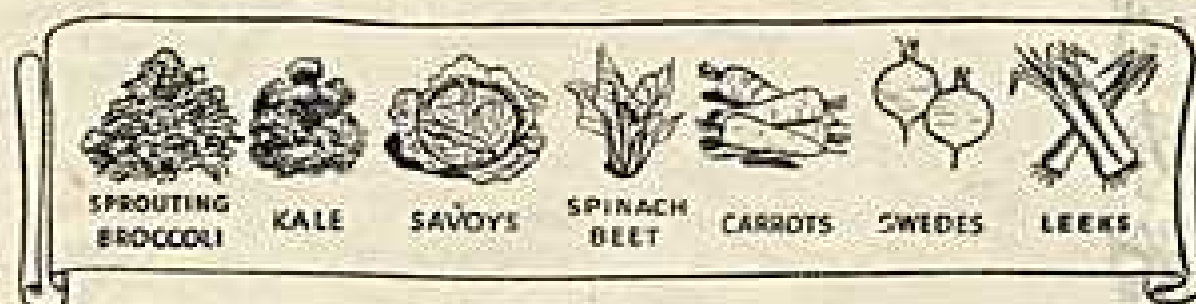


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thought and attention. If you have been following this monthly "Guide"—with such alterations as your family's likes and dislikes have dictated—you should have little cause to worry; but if you have so far been happy-go-lucky in your choice of crops, you still have time in June to do something to put matters right. The crops you want for next winter—assuming your family likes them all—are the green crops—Brussels sprouts, sprouting broccoli, kale, savoys; the roots—parsnips, carrots, turnips and swedes; onions and leeks; dried peas and beans; potatoes.

It is too late to do anything about potatoes, onions and parsnips, if they are not already growing on your plot. While it is too late to sow seeds of Brussels sprouts, sprouting broccoli, kale and savoys, you can order some

Crops for the lean period



plants of the last three from your usual nursery or shop. Kale and sprouting broccoli should be put out about mid-July, savoys later in that month or in early August. Though it is rather late to plant Brussels, there is just the chance that you may get a fair crop if you put in the plants at once.

During July, too, you could sow a row of spinach beet that, given favourable conditions, should give you a crop of excellent green leaves next winter and right on through the spring.

If you like leeks and have not sown seeds in the seedbed, you can get some plants and put them out in July.

As to root crops, main crop carrots can be sown in June to early July, swedes at the end of June, turnips in July.

The experts tell us that we need some of that precious body-

building stuff—protein—in our diet. Now dried peas and beans are a valuable source of protein, and it is worth while saving some of our crops for the purpose, as well as to provide seeds for sowing next year—always assuming that we save our own seeds, a subject which will be dealt with in a later Guide. Do your saving systematically, however. Don't just leave a few late pods on each plant, but reserve a number of plants at each end of the row.

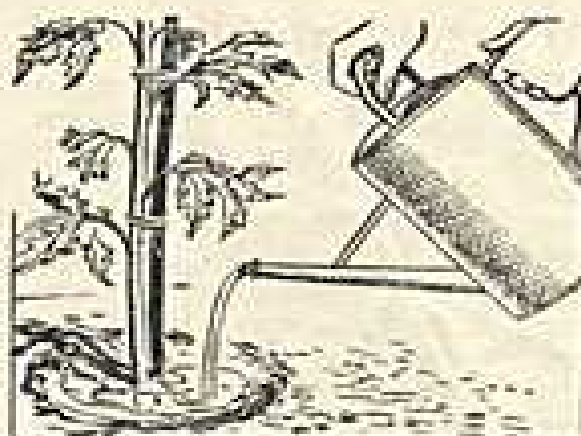
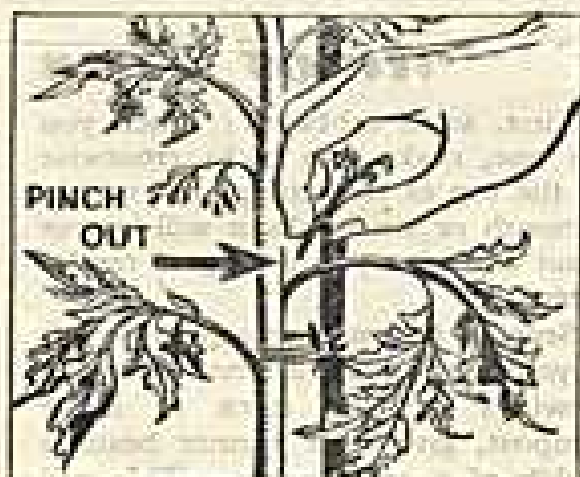
Having looked ahead and made sure—at least in our minds—that we are not going to be caught napping in the few months from next February, let us come back to the present for a bit and concentrate on essential jobs of the month. First, *thinning*—and no apology is made for returning once more to this important operation. And don't forget to keep that hoe going regularly.

THINNING

This needs to be done now practically every week. Beet, carrots, parsnips, lettuce and spinach have all to be thinned as they become large enough. Thinning was dealt with in the May "Guide" and all that it is necessary to add now is that it is a good time to apply a little fertilizer after the plants have been thinned and are beginning to grow strongly. A dressing of $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. of sulphate of ammonia can be hoed in per yard of row.

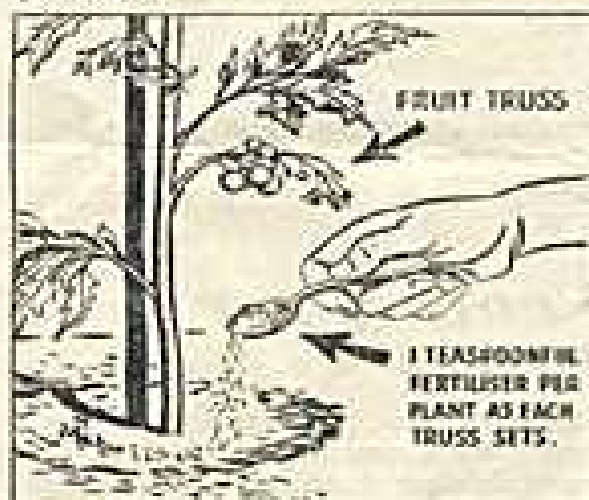
TOMATOES

The May "Guide" dealt with the planting of tomatoes. To get the best results keep each plant to the main stem, pinching out the side-shoots that come in the corners formed by the leaf stalks and the main stem. Keep the plants *well watered* and feed them regularly with a good complete fertilizer. There are a number of proprietary brands of tomato fertilizer that should be used according to the suppliers' instruc-



tions. Or you can use "National Growmore." A good working rule is to apply a teaspoonful per plant as each truss of fruit sets.

When watering, remember that it is useless just to damp the soil surface, for this merely encourages surface rooting. You must water well, giving about half-a-gallon to each plant. Tomato fruits are often split when the plants are given a heavy watering after having been dry. That is because the skin gets hard and inelastic and cannot expand when the fruit swells after a good watering, so it splits or cracks. So don't let the plants get dry.



"Blight" is the chief disease likely to affect tomatoes in the

open. It may attack only the fruit, but the stem and leaves may be affected as well. Intense brown or black blotches are the signs, and infected fruits often fall off the plant. The discoloured areas are edged with a downy white growth. It's the same blight that attacks potatoes. To control it, spray your plants with a copper spray (see next section).

Take care of your **POTATOES**

Potatoes are growing strongly now. In most places they have been earthened up. Remember, when earthing, not to draw the soil up to a greater height than about 6 in. and do not leave a flat top or trough to the ridge. Finish it off to as sharp a point as possible. This prevents spores of potato blight from being washed down by rain to infect the tubers. Don't try to earth up when the soil is wet.

To a large extent the danger of blight attack depends on the weather: if dry, only local attacks are likely and will not cause serious damage; given frequent spells of warm, moist weather, the tops may be completely killed by the end of July or in August. The effect on the crop would be serious, if the tops were badly affected. The weight of crop would be greatly reduced; and if the disease spreads to the tubers themselves, they may rot in the ground or after you have stored them.

WHAT TO DO. If you live within 10 or 12 miles of a large industrial centre, where the air is laden with fumes and smoke, do

not spray, but seek advice locally: the secretary of your local allotment society, the horticultural committee of the council or the park superintendent should be able to help you. Gardeners who are not in areas likely to be affected by fumes from factories should, as a form of insurance against blight, spray their potato foliage with one of the copper-containing sprays recommended for the purpose. Perhaps the simplest course is to buy one of the ready-made Bordeaux powders or pastes and apply it according to the maker's instructions. Usually you have only to mix it with water and it is less trouble to prepare than a home-made mixture.

If you have a hand-dusting machine, you could apply one of the powders made for the purpose—copper-lime or Bordeaux dust. Dust needs to be applied more often than sprays, however—four or five applications should be given, allowing a fortnight each.

WHEN TO SPRAY. The right time for the first dusting or spray-



ing is just before the leaves of the potatoes meet in the rows; this

usually happens at the end of June or early in July. Don't wait until you see blight spots on the leaves—if you do find any, spray at once. If dusts are used, further applications are needed every fortnight; with the spray, a second application after three weeks should be sufficient. But if the blight attack is severe, a third spraying may be needed in August.

Making Bordeaux Mixture

If you prefer to make your own Bordeaux mixture here is the recipe. The quantities mentioned will make enough spray for about 2 rods of potatoes. Put 2½ gallons of water into a bucket; pour off a quart of the water into an earthenware or enamelled jug, and dissolve 4 oz. of copper sulphate in it (powdered or granular copper sulphate is preferable, as it dissolves easily). In the bucket containing the remaining water dissolve 5 oz. of fresh hydrated lime and stir well. When the copper sulphate has all dissolved, pour the blue solution slowly into the bucket containing the lime solution, stirring all the time. It is then ready for use and should be used the day it is made. To avoid clogging your sprayer, it is worth while straining the solution through a piece of muslin. Immediately after use always rinse the bucket or other container, as well as the sprayer, with clean water in which a little washing soda has been dissolved.

Points to Remember

You can use a stirrup pump, if you obtain a fine spray nozzle for it.

A misty spray is best, as it wets the foliage easily.

If you have no sprayer, you can use a watering can with a fine rose.

Make certain that *both* sides of the foliage as well as the stems are thoroughly wetted.

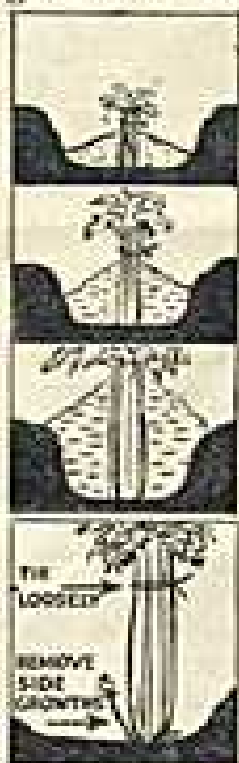
Choose a fine day so that the spray has time to dry before the next fall of rain.

It is much easier if you can co-operate with some friends or neighbours and spray several batches of potatoes on the same day.

Earthing up CELERY

Before you earth-up, tie the celery plants loosely just below the leaflets and remove any side growths. When the plants are about 15 in. high, earth-up slightly, but see that the ground is thoroughly moist before you begin. The

second and third earthings—at three-weekly intervals—can be more thorough, until finally the soil should cover the plants right up to the leaves and should slope away neatly. Don't let any soil fall into the heart of the plant.



Are you watching out for those Pests?

Any signs of *black fly* yet? Some gardeners think that this pest is encouraged by broad beans, but there is no foundation for this. You may quite likely find it on your "runners." Wherever you come across it, take the measures recommended on pages 7 and 8 of the April Guide. And if you are growing broad beans, remove the growing tips when the plants are in full flower. If the winds are high and the plants look like being broken, put in a few stout stakes and run some stout string around the rows.

While the April Guide deals with other garden pests that may be a nuisance in June (slugs on your lettuce, cabbage root fly and carrot fly), it may not cover some pests that may trouble you. *Colony fly* for instance. Redden blisters may appear on the leaves. Watch the seedlings carefully for blistered leaves, and destroy them or crush them with your fingers. Dust the plants weekly with soot to prevent egg laying. If the attack is serious, spray the leaves (both sides) with a nicotine and soap wash.

Then *onion fly* may also cause trouble, especially on dry soils. As a precaution dust the soil along each side of the rows with 4 per cent. Calomel when the plants are about an inch high.

Feed your CROPS

Beet, carrots, parsnips and onions benefit by a dressing of sulphate of ammonia after thinning— $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. to the yard run. If your carrots and onions are attacked by the fly, a similar dressing will help them considerably.

LETTUCE

Don't forget to sow a short row of seed every fortnight to ensure a succession. And if you transplant the thinnings from earlier rows, see that you give them a good start. Don't put them on lumpy ground and don't water them late on a cold evening or leave them without water at all. If the plot reserved for lettuce is lumpy and not easy to break down to a fine tilth, sift some fine soil over the surface, see that the seedlings are firmly planted and watered well at the right time until they are firmly established.

MARROWS

Although marrows are usually sown in the open towards the end of May, it's not too late to sow in June. In a sunny corner dig in some well-rotted manure or compost and set a few groups of seed—four or five seeds to each group—about 6 in. apart and 1 in. deep. Later, thin each group to two plants, 12 to 15 in. apart. Marrows need a lot of water. Make sure they get it, particularly in dry weather.

Couple of Tips

First, as to cabbages: when you cut one, make two nicks crosswise on the top of the stump, and within a month or six weeks it will sprout again and give you a crop of tender greens.

Second, if you have any grass left in your garden and are not using the mowings to feed stock or make compost, give your runner beans a mulch of 2 or 3 inches. This will



help to conserve the moisture and benefit the beans considerably.

More Root Crops

The main root crops may be sown in June or early July—beet (early June), maincrop carrots (June or early July) and swedes (mid-June). The sowing of beet and carrots was dealt with in the April Guide (p. 3), so the details will not be repeated here.

Bear in mind, too, that the above times for sowing are merely general reminders, and that gardeners must have regard to local conditions and advice from the experienced. For instance, as to carrots, in the midlands and the north, mid-June is regarded as the latest date to sow with an assurance of a good crop; while in the south and west, sowings may often be made with safety up to mid-July. Another point is that late-sown carrots are less liable to attacks by the "fly" than those sown earlier in the year.

SWEDES

Swedes are a safer crop in some districts than turnips. They can stand the cold better and can be left in the ground until after Christmas. Though there are garden varieties of swedes, the field sorts such as "Best of All" and "Eclipse" are really the best to grow.

Swedes are usually sown in mid-

June (earlier in the north) in drills 15 in. apart and 1 in. deep. The Ministry's plan provides for two rows, but don't grow them if you don't like them. The seedlings of field sorts should be thinned to 9 in. apart.

For those who like to try out unusual vegetables, *Kohl Rabi* is a useful crop to grow on very light soils where turnips are risky owing to drought or flea beetle attacks. You can still sow it in June in the seedbed, transplanting to rows 15 in. apart with 8 in. between plants. It is better, however, to drill in the ordinary way, like swedes and turnips, and thin out. *Kohl Rabi* should not be stored for any length of time, but should be eaten soon after lifting.

A word about Gathering Crops

Before the full spate of summer vegetables begins, a few words about gathering crops may not be out of place. Gather in the morning or evening, when they are fresh and not limp from the sun; handle them carefully, so that they come into the kitchen fresh and tempting. More important, however, is to gather crops before they are past their prime. It is a mistake to leave batches of cabbages, lettuces, peas and other vegetables until the whole crop is ready for use. So often the gardener cannot bring himself to gather his vegetables before they are fully matured, with the result that when they are ready, he is unable to cope with them all at once and many go to waste. Use your vegetables on the young side; they are more tasty, and the scientists tell us they do you more good than when they are old and tending to be tough. On the other hand, of course, don't be extravagant about it. There is no sense in picking them so young that a whole crop is used up in a meal or two.